

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 /082 W

----- 122245

R 131018Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1077

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, LE

SUBJECT: REPORT FROM CHRISTIAN SIDE

1. JOS FITCHETT, LONDON OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT, JUST RETURNED FROM TWO WEEKS ON CHRISTIAN SIDE, HAD FOLLOWING TO REPORT.

2. MARONITES ARE FLUSHED WITH THEIR VICTORIES OVER PALESTINIAN MILITANTS AND SHOW ABSOLUTELY NO SIGNS OF BEING WILLING TO COMPROMISE

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MARONITE LEADERS WITH WHOM FITCHETT TALKED STATED CATEGORICALLY THEY WOULD MAKE NO CONCESSIONS TO LEBANESE MOSLEMS. LATTER WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT THEIR TERMS OR ELSE. AT SAME TIME, FITCHETT CLAIMED HE FOUND LITTLE MARONITE INTEREST IN PERMANENT PARTITION, WHICH HIS INTERLOCUTORS CHARACTERIZED AS ECONOMICALLY UNVIALE.

3. FITCHETT, WHO VISITED SEVERAL FIGHTING FRONTS, WAS IMPRESSED

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BY FIGHTING ABILITIES OF KATAEB AND CHAMOUNISTS. HE SAID LEBANESE

CHRISTIAN MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATED INTO THESE UNITS, PRIMARILY TO HANDLE ARTILLERY FIRS. AT FIRST, MILITARY OFFICERS WERE RESENTED FOR HAVING REMAINED IN ARMY SO LONG, COOPERATI

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ING WITH MOSLEMS, WITHOUT DOING BATTLE FOR MARONITE CHRISTIAN CAUSE. NOW, HOWEVER, PARA-MILITARY UNITS FIND MILITARY KNOW-HOW OF THESE OFFICERS VERY VALUABLE. FITCHETT SAID THAT THEIR ARTILLERY FIRE IS IXTREMELY ACCURATE.

4. FITCHETT CLAIMED THAT HEAVY EQUIPMENT SUCH AS APC'S AND ARTILLERY, ARE OF SOVIET ORIGIN, PRESUMABLY OBTAINED FROM ISRAEL. FITCHETT SAID HE SAW LOTS OF AMERICAN AND NATO EQUIPMENT AND THAT STORES OF AMMUNITION ARE ENORMOUS. HE NOTED THAT DATE ON MOST AMMUNITION BOXES HE SAW IS 1975.

5. FITCHETT STATED THAT SHELLING OF JOUNIE FROM THIS SIDE HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL IN JOUNIE PORT AREA. FORTUNATELY THERE HAVE BEEN FEW CASUALTIES BUT PORT AREA HAS BEEN DAMAGED. AS RESULT, MARONITES ARE MOVING FACILITIES TO RECENTLY OCCUPIED PORT OF CHEKKA, WHICH IS OUT OF WEST BEIRUT ARTILLERY RANGE. ONE BOAT FROM CYPRUS WAS HIT JUST AFTER DEBARKING PASSENGERS. FITCHETT SAID THAT MOST OF SHELLING WAS FROM ROCKETS, WHICH DID LESS DAMAGE THAN 155MM ROUNDS. SEELYE

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